

October 31, 2006

Susan LeVan-Green  
Forest Products Laboratory  
USDA-Forest Service  
One Gifford Pinchot Drive  
Madison, WI 53726-2398

**Re.: Ranch Creek Limited Application for Woody Biomass Grant**

Dear Ms. LeVan-Green:

I urge you to support an application submitted by Ranch Creek Limited in Granby, Colorado, for funds through the 2007 Woody Biomass Grant Program. With these funds, Ranch Creek hopes to purchase much needed equipment to continue to absorb infected beetle kill timber and maintain slash burning operations at their facility in Grand County.

I am pleased for the opportunity to support this proposal. This region of Colorado is the epicenter of one of the most significant outbreaks of pine beetle kill in recent memory. With nearly 85% of the surrounding forest dead or dying, the communities of Grand County are burdened with a large volume of hazardous fuels near homes and community buildings. I understand that Ranch Creek Limited was one of the first companies in the region to confront this issue by serving as a collecting point for infected timber. In 2005, they purchased an air curtain destructor for slash burning to improve their collecting capacity. Despite their efforts, the scale of the beetle kill epidemic remains tremendous and they need additional funding to keep pace with the demand for their services. With Woody Biomass funds, they hope to purchase a log lathe and additional sorting bays to round out their operation.

I strongly urge you to support this proposal. Ranch Creek has a proven track record of tackling the urgent issue of disposal of infected beetle kill timber in Grand County. Sadly, there is much more work to be done and their services will continue to be sorely needed, now and far into the future.

Please keep my office informed of any developments with this proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar  
United States Senator